

ABOUT VISUAL ARTISTS

Nancy Erickson: Kindred Spirits

Jan. 24-April 20 at the Montana Museum of Art and Culture at The University of Montana, with an opening reception from 5-7 p.m. Jan. 31

Artist's website: www.nancyerickson.com

Missoula artist Nancy Erickson's artwork speaks to the dignity and integrity of individual wild creatures, whom she views as our equals. The nationally recognized fiber artist is the 2013 Odyssey of the Stars featured artist, and will be celebrated March 16 at the Odyssey "Fabric of Life" gala, hosted by the UM College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Erickson was born in the Midwest and raised on a cattle ranch in Livingston. She holds a bachelor's in zoology and a master's degree in nutrition from the University of Iowa and an MA and MFA from The University of Montana.

Since the 1960s, she has created remarkable fabric constructions, quilts, paintings and drawings. Her work resides in numerous public and private collections and has been featured in over 500 exhibitions nationally, most recently in a fiber work invitational in Raleigh, NC, and the Museum of Art and Design in New York City.

"Kindred Spirits" honors her achievements and features her pioneering large-scale, free-form textile compositions, which combine paint and stitched fabric. This exhibition highlights seldom-seen or never-before-exhibited work inspired by the magnificent cave art found at Chauvet Pont d'Arc and Lascaux, France.

Related events include "An evening with the Pattee Canyon Ladies Salon," including Erickson, and artists Stephanie Frostad, Kristi Hagar, Becki Johnson, Beth Lo, Leslie Van Stavern Millar, Shari Montana, Linda Tawney and Janet Whaley, 7 p.m. Feb. 6 in the UM Montana Theatre, and an artist's talk, 7 p.m. Feb. 20, also at the Montana Theatre.



"Fire Season, Western Montana" by Nancy Erickson

Jerry Iverson: "Nerve Blocks"

Through Feb. 28 at the Emerson Center, Bozeman

Dramatic large-scale collages by Big Timber artist, poet and sheep shearer Jerry Iverson are on display in an exhibit that he says reflects "the strained and shattered nerves that happen in life."

Iverson's abstract works are composed of layered paper with gestural marks of the blackest Sumi ink. His additive processes incorporate both overt and hidden qualities; the work is loud yet reserved. "The large-scale format and expressionist physicality are a great match for the spacious Weaver Room," says Emerson curator Ellen Ornitz.

"My art has been much influenced by the materials, balance and grace of Asian calligraphy," writes Iverson. "I don't know what it means, but I love how it looks. I use many layers of Sumi ink and paper to build a distressed, uneven texture. Torn and broken black lines create a tense, awkward balance. In order to examine an idea thoroughly, I like to work in series. One idea, over and over again."

Iverson was raised on a farm in South Dakota and graduated from St. Olaf College with a degree in philosophy. In 1977 he moved to Montana and currently lives on a ranch near Big Timber.

The Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings and the Holter Art Museum in Helena have hosted solo exhibits of his artwork. His paintings have also been featured in group shows in New York, Chicago, Phoenix, and San Diego. In 2009 he received the Artists Innovation Award from the Montana Arts Council and in 2011 he was a finalist for the Contemporary Northwest Art Award given by the Portland Art Museum in Oregon. He is represented by Pulliam Gallery in Portland, OR.



"Nerve Blocks" by Jerry Iverson

Carol Hartman: "Concurrent Nature"

Jan. 18-April 26 at Zoot Gallery in Bozeman, with a reception 5-8 p.m. Jan. 17

Artist's website: www.carolhartman.biz

Carol Hartman grew up in Charley Creek, across the river from Brockton, in the far reaches of eastern Montana. The artist recently returned to her home state after nearly four decades. "Now finally, I'm back and I'm painting images reminiscent of my rural upbringing," she says. "I'm even using cattle markers as my preferred medium."

Hartman received formal art training at Montana State University Bozeman and California State University Fresno, where she taught and directed the art galleries at CSUF.

As a child, she spent considerable time "memorizing" pockets of beauty found in Charley Creek. Since returning to Montana, she has vigorously delved into expressing those memories using cattle markers

and oil paint, exhibiting both locally and internationally. She now produces over 100 new artworks each year.

The paintings in "Concurrent Nature" explore the relationships between man and nature, and humanity's immersion into nature to find truths.

The cattle markers and oil pigments allow the artist to blend colors in a fashion that's similar to the Tonalist methods of paint application. "That manipulation of color is what excites me," she says. Her fearless use of bold colors, thick, tactile application of pigment, and the frequent inclusion of actual remnants within the finished artwork also bring excitement to the pieces.

Hartman has also mined memories to create interactive electronic installations that have been displayed in large spaces from New York City to Washington, DC, to Los Angeles. She was recently selected as a 2013 Woman of the Year in the Arts by the National Association of Professional Women.



"Cottonwood Coulee Bottom" by Carol Hartman

David Spear: "A Timeless Town in Time — Butte, Montana"

Through Feb. 11 at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls

Polson photographer David J. Spear's fascinating perspectives of the people and places of Butte, spanning from 1977 to 2008, are on display for the first time. Spear became captivated by the town during a St. Patrick's Day celebration and began making regular trips there.

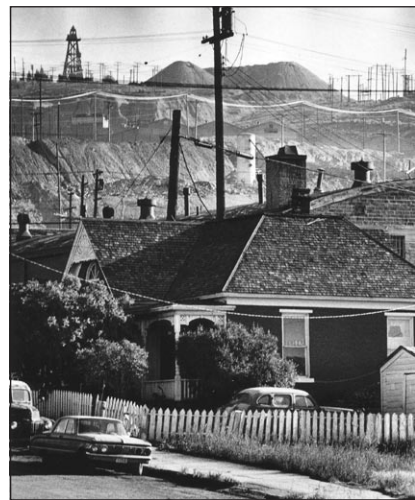
"I was inspired by Butte's photographic history and wanted to add my own contribution," he writes. "Beginning in the 1990s, I started making regular trips to the region from New York

to photograph for a week or two at a time. My fascination with Butte's historic buildings and neighborhoods occupied me until the town's inhabitants began to allow me to make their picture."

He arrived as an outsider, but left feeling more connected to the richness of Butte history, tradition and community life with each visit. The artwork is accompanied by the poetry of long-time Butte resident Ed Lahey.

Spear, who moved to Montana in the late '90s, launched Our Community Record, an award-winning photography program at Two Eagle River School in Pablo (see story on page 1). He also teaches photography and journalism at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, and offers artist residencies at schools around the state through the Montana Arts Council. His work has appeared in a host of national and international publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *German Geo*, the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *Granta*.

His photographs have been collected by the Missoula Art Museum (where he had a solo show in 2010) and the Salish Pend d'Oreille Cultural Committee. He has also taught photography at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and the Main Media Workshops.



"Butte Old Autos" by David Spear

Neil Jussila: "Joseph in Montana – The Nez Perce Epic"

Jan. 2-31 at the Depot Gallery in Red Lodge

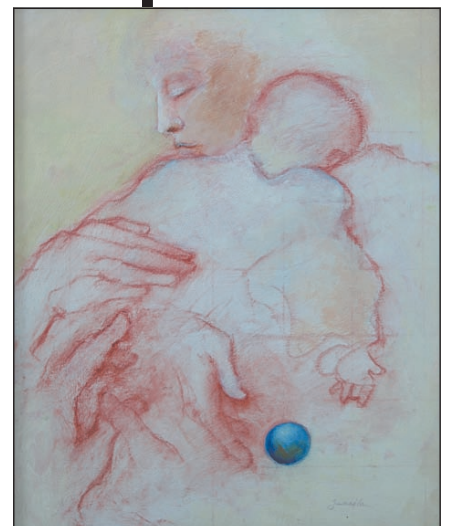
Billings artist Neil Jussila shares 16 expressive paintings that capture the range of emotion and physical exertion that might have been felt by the Niimiipu (or Nez Perce), as they fled the 7th Cavalry in 1877 along a perilous and battle-filled, 1,170-mile long journey through Idaho and Montana.

The artist suggests that the paintings in this exhibit should not be viewed as literal depictions of places or subjects but rather as visual metaphors for what Jussila imagined as he considered the emotional drama that played out along what is now referred to as the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Raised in what he refers to as "the lively catawampus" of Butte, Jussila served as a Vietnam combat veteran before earning his bachelor of science degree (1966) and a master of arts administration (1969) from Montana State University Bozeman. He taught art at MSU Billings for 43 years, retiring in 2012.

Growing up and serving the country during an especially divisive time, Jussila eventually found solace in painting. His work is among the most poetic and sensitive non-objective work done in the region and reflects his ability to transcend the literal implications of socio/political culture.

"I have no problem with taking what is in the world and putting it into my work," Jussila told the *Billings Gazette* last year. "It's all about innovation and creative thinking, that's the trip."



"Redemption" by Neil Jussila

About Visual Artists is compiled by Kristi Niemeyer for *State of the Arts*



19

Send your submissions for About Visual Arts

With About Visual Arts, *State of the Arts* continues to profile living Montana artists (no students, please), whose work is the focus of a current exhibit (on display during some portion of the two months covered by the current issue of *State of the Arts*).

Submissions must include:

- A digital image of the artist's work, with title of the piece;
- A brief bio and description of the artist's work (up to 300 words);
- Dates and title of exhibit; and
- The gallery or museum name, town and phone number.

MAC will select submissions that reflect a cross-section of gender, geography, styles and ethnicity, and are from a mix of public and private galleries and museums.

Deadline for submissions for the March/April is Feb. 1. Please send submissions to write us@livelytimes.com with About Visual Arts in the subject line.